

Snakeheads & Ladybugs

Jack Mouse and Scott Robinson

Jack Mouse – Drums

Scott Robinson – Saxophones, cornet, clarinet

Long time friends, drummer Jack Mouse and multi-instrumentalist Scott Robinson demonstrate their artistic kinship and seamless camaraderie with a set of spontaneous duets on the curious *Snakeheads & Ladybugs*. Despite its entirely adlib origins the album remains rather accessible and engaging and not at all abstruse.

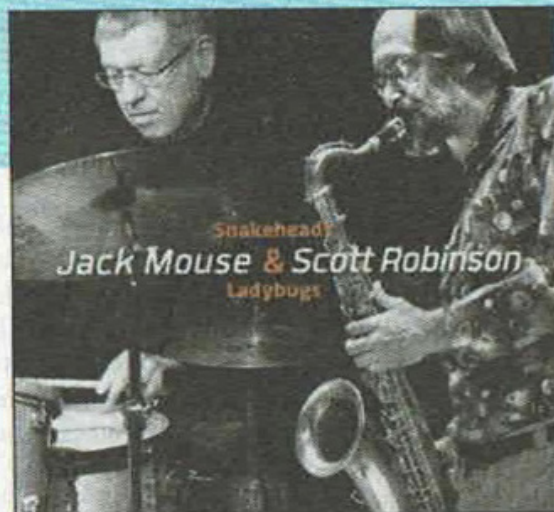
Robinson's wailing saxophone over Mouse's hyper-rhythmic rolling drums creates a passionate and intriguing ambience on "Bolero Incognito." Robinson's longing notes pierce the enveloping silent pauses as Mouse's cymbals splash and shimmer darkly underneath. The result is quite evocative and stirring.

A similar dramatic flair imbues

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variety of genres both within and without jazz. In addition to the bolero mentioned above, their "Backward Glance" is an intelligent and stimulating deconstruction of a swing tune. "Freebop," on the other hand, has the crisp, clever freshness of bebop and the unfettered, intuitive approach of freer styles.

The aimless meander of few of the pieces becomes rather distracting but the musicians' superb improvisational skills keep them, nevertheless, quite delightful. "Orcan," for instance, has a mystical atmosphere that Mouse's resonant rumble and Robinson's thrilling, edgy howl create.



"Shapeshifter," the longest track on the record. Commencing with Mouse's cinematic, expectant beats and Robinson's wailing sax, it quickly evolves into an eastern-flavored poetic dialogue. Robinson showcases his versatility with a lilting, melancholic saxophone solo and a mellow, burnished cornet one. Mouse enhances the bittersweet nostalgia with his carefully placed, elegant rustles.

Mouse and Robinson pay homage to a

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Mouse's rattling shakers and Robinson's brief punctuating phrases, however, do not propel this hypnotic performance to a satisfying conclusion.

Likewise the harmonically vibrant "Fandango" finds Robinson's mournful reed sashaying to Mouse's percolating thuds and thrums without a progression to a memorable finale.

Although not meant for casual listeners and despite its few rough spots, this unique CD is both thought provoking and, in its own way, quite charming. It will definitely impress and engross open-minded fans of cerebral music.

—Hrayr Attarian